

**Para Todos
Facilitator Guide
DVD 1—Chapter 2
Acculturation**

Dear Facilitators:

The purpose of this chapter is to provide information about acculturation and how the process of adaptation to a new culture affects both the individual and the family.

Chapter Goals:

1. To understand how the process of adaptation can affect emotional well-being, as well as social and cultural aspects of our families.
2. To understand, manage, and respect the values of the new culture.

Suggestions for Guest Speakers:

To enrich the session, the facilitator could invite the following experts:

- Parent who has learned how to handle acculturation issues
- Director of a Latino community center
- Writer or journalist who specializes in Latino issues
- Social worker
- Professional who works in a Latino mental health organization
- Teacher of English as a Second Language
- Guidance counselor
- Latino youth who have gone through these situations.

VIDEO, PART I

Main Concepts:

The following concepts are presented in the first section:

1. The cultural differences we encounter when we move to the United States can affect the whole family. When we leave our countries, we leave behind family,

friends, traditions, neighborhoods, food, music, and so much more. This can create a feeling of emptiness in our lives.

2. Dealing with change can cause feelings of fear, anxiety, and worry. Some parents find it very difficult to adapt to the new customs and they react unfavorably towards their children. In some cases, frustration leads parents to resort to yelling out of frustration, turn to alcohol, or lash out in violence.
3. Our children face the challenge of living between two worlds. Often they are unsure which world they belong to, and do not quite fit into either. This can cause a lot of stress, confusion, rebellion, and depression.
4. Children experience different cultural values at home and at school, and they often must choose between them. This can be difficult.

Dramatization: Mi Barrio #1

In the first vignette, we meet a Latino family. The daughter is a 16-year-old who dresses and behaves just like any other teenager. This causes conflict with her grandmother and father, who disapprove of the clothes she wears and her friends. The problem becomes even bigger when the girl rejects the traditions of Latino culture and identifies more with North American culture. The father is worried that in the United States his kids are exposed to bad influences and risky behavior such as early sexual activity and gangs. He feels frustrated that he no longer has control over his family and he wants to return to his country.

The mother, on the other hand, has a good job and feels she is stuck in the middle of this conflict. Both parents discuss these issues with their friends (comadre/compadre), who explain that these situations are common in many immigrant families. Their friends assure them that things will improve if they talk things over with each other. Their friends explain the importance of understanding that the children are living between two worlds. They also emphasize the parents should remember that, when they were young, they had conflicts with their own parents. The purpose of this dramatization is to show how acculturation can affect a family.

PAUSE FOR DISCUSSION #3

Participants respond to the following questions:

- Have you seen similar situations in your communities?

- Which family member is right?
- What is causing frustration in this family?
- How do the parents deal with their fears as they watch the changes in their children?

The following important points should be included in the discussion:

- Examples of these situations in their communities and examples from the facilitator's own life.
- There is no right or wrong answer. Each family member has a point.
- Family frustration can be due to a lack of communication between family members and the fact that the parents don't understand the children and vice versa.
- Another cause for frustration could be the parents' anxiety as they see changes in their children.

VIDEO, PART II

Main Concepts:

This section emphasizes the importance of understanding and overcoming the conflicts that arise during the process of acculturation. The following concepts are presented:

1. It is important to establish family rules regarding respect so that everyone can express himself or herself without fear, resentment, or shouting.
2. In order to create an environment where everyone respects one another, parents need to try to understand what matters to our children.
3. It is hard being a parent, but if one is loving, respectful, and trustworthy, it is easier to solve many of the problems that arise during the process of acculturation.
4. The most important thing is to never reject or look down on our children.

Dramatization: Mi Barrio #2

The mother expresses her frustration over the conflicts between the father, grandmother, and daughter. Her friend explains that it is a difficult situation for parents because life is different in the United States. She adds that the adaptation process can bring about many difficulties. Children change, especially since they have to figure out how to fit into a new social environment. As a result, parents often feel isolated and powerless.

The two women recall their own conflicts with their mothers and recognize that one way of dealing with these problems is through open and honest communication.

At the same time, the father tells his friend that he is afraid their new environment is harmful for his children and wife. He is thinking about taking his family back to his country. The friend suggests he make these decisions when he is calmer. The friend tells him that many immigrant families face these same issues, and that it is important to value and adopt the best aspects of both cultures.

The friend also advises him to talk to his daughter with love and respect, tell her how much he loves her, and be honest about his fears for her well-being. Finally, he emphasizes the importance of establishing family rules for mutual respect and that everyone, including the parents, should follow these rules.

PAUSE FOR DISCUSSION #4

Participants respond to the following questions:

- Do you think the parents will follow the advice offered by their friends?
- What were some of the strategies suggested to overcome the problems depicted in the dramatization?
- What other strategies would you use?

It is very important that the answers include the concepts of mutual family respect and understanding children's needs—learn about their world and, at the same time, teach them your traditions.

VIDEO, PART III—CONCLUSION

Main Concepts:

The following concepts are presented in the third section:

Among the many factors that can have an impact on acculturation issues are our countries of origin, where we live, how long we have been in the United States, and our age.

The facilitator can recommend community resources that can help with acculturation issues.

Optional Activities

Next, we offer suggestions for group activities that are not included in the video. If you would like to tell us how the activity worked with your group, or suggest ideas for additional activities, please contact us at webmaster@hablemos.samhsa.gov.

ACTIVITY #1: What Is Acculturation?

Goal: To understand the acculturation process and learn ways to bridge Latino norms and values with the norms and values our children encounter in the United States.

- **Divide** the participants into three groups.
- **Ask** the participants of each group to work on the questions below.
- **Invite** the participants to write down their ideas and present them to the larger group.
- **Discuss** other ideas they can offer in relation to acculturation.
- **Explore** how the changes could have been dealt with or how the process of adaptation could have been a little easier.
- **Encourage** the participants to talk about personal experiences regarding the acculturation process.

Questions:

1. What does acculturation mean to you?
2. How does acculturation affect family life?
3. How can we integrate both cultures?

The following are suggestions for discussion:

Question 1:

- Acculturation is the process of cultural change that takes place as one group or individual is in continuous contact with another group or individual from a different culture. Acquiring a second culture or becoming bicultural is the result of this sociocultural process.
- It is common for the individual or family to go through many social and psychological problems because they have to adapt to many difficult changes.

- During this process, people face many challenges and changes in behavior, attitudes, norms, values, and language. Therefore, it is important to find a balance between cultural and linguistic values.

Question 2:

- In Latino culture, the family unit, collaboration, and cooperation are very important. On the other hand, independence, individual autonomy, and personal achievements are highly valued and encouraged in the United States.
- Many immigrant parents feel that their children—who tend to adapt more quickly to the new culture—are defying their authority.
- North American customs are reinforced at school, and this accentuates the differences. We should be aware of the differences in the values of both cultures. Parents should understand that these differences cause youth to feel pressured, and they want to be just like their new friends. This, of course, causes conflict within the family.

Question 3:

- For example, assertiveness and independence are valued in North American culture. These values can help us and our children get ahead and fulfill our potential.
- Respect is very important in Latino culture. This characteristic also can help us get ahead and be successful.

ACTIVITY #2: Changes

Goal: To learn how to incorporate aspects of a new culture without compromising our values.

- **Divide** the participants into three groups.
- **Ask** the participants to work on the following questions.
- **Invite** the participants to write down their ideas and present them to the group.
- **Explore** other ideas relevant to acculturation.

Questions:

1. In what ways are we changing due to the process of adaptation?
2. Which of these changes seem to be more difficult for parents, yet easier for children?
3. Which of these changes seem to be more difficult for children, yet easier for parents?

The following are some suggested responses:

Question 1:

- Attitudes
- Norms
- Values
- Language
- Customs.

Question 2:

- Learning English

- Making friends
- Understanding how the school system works.

Question 3:

- Identity development
- Sense of purpose
- Norm conflicts.

ACTIVITY #3: Conflict Between Two Cultures (Values and Principles)

Goal: To understand norm conflicts and differences between the two cultures.

- **Ask** the participants to discuss the greatest differences between North American and Latino cultures.
- **Make a list** of ideas, and keep in mind that each idea is valuable.

The following are some suggested responses:

1. In Latino culture, the family is more important than the individual. In North American culture, the focus is on the individual.
2. In Latino culture, unity and cooperation are more important than competition. In North American culture, competition is very important.
3. In Latino culture, the family tends to maintain the traditional male and female roles. In North American culture, the roles are less traditional.
4. In Latino culture, the family acts as a support network that helps children with their personal, economic, and health problems. In North American culture, children are taught to solve their own problems and not to depend so much on the support of others.
5. In Latino culture, adults expect children to be obedient and respectful of their elders and to greet them appropriately. In North American culture, there isn't such an emphasis on things such as greeting and saying goodbye.

Take-Home Activity

ACTIVITY #4: You and Me

Goal: For parents and guardians to learn about the adaptation process their children are going through.

- **Suggest** participants do this activity at home with their children.
- **Ask** participants to interview each other about the things they value and like the most. At your next session, ask volunteers to share what they learned and ask them to mention the differences and similarities between their responses and their children's.

Questions:

1. What type of people do you feel the most at ease with? (For example, people from a specific country, age group, or ethnic group).
2. What is your favorite type of music?
3. Which holidays do you celebrate?
4. What is your favorite food?
5. What is the most important thing in your life? (For example, studying for a specific career, having healthy children, or traveling).